

REPORT UNDER RULE 2(vi) OF THE COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES

**REPORT BY COUNCILLOR BOB BUSHELL – PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR
REMARKABLE PLACE**

Introduction

I am pleased to report that in general terms, despite a few ‘glitches’ at times in specific service areas, as is to be expected with such a complex range of services, the services provided by Community Services staff and associated contractors have remained at a good standard for the public over the last year.

My overall approach to the provision of street scene and open space services has remained the same throughout, in that I am keen we have a clear set of base standards set out in the contract specifications, and that these are the base from which other initiatives can then build.

As members will know, both from my report last year, and from the all-member workshops, the reletting of the Council’s street scene contracts is presently of the highest priority. Set-up times for contracts have lengthened considerably on the back of greatly extended vehicle procurement times. As a result, although the new contracts won’t start until September 2026, it is necessary to award them in 2024, or early 2025 at the very latest. Early letting not only assists with vehicle procurement, but of course also smooths the transition period, and permits better budget planning.

Full document reviews have now taken place for the waste/recycling management and street cleansing contract, and this is out to seek market interest now. After reviewing any potential bidders with due diligence checks, it is intended that tenders will be received and evaluated, with the intention of being in a position to let the contract formally by July next year.

The grounds maintenance contract documents are still in development phase, with an anticipated award date that will follow on, in early spring 2025 at the latest.

Outside of this considerable body of work, services under existing contracts have continued as usual, with several initiatives worthy of note.

As is now customary, to aid clarity with my report I have sought to divide the relevant work areas under my remit into clear service blocks. Clearly there are some interdependencies and overlap of resources, as staff frequently work across areas, but I hope members continue to find this approach helpful.

In closing the introduction, I should make reference to the timing of this report. It is unfortunate that it falls towards the end of the year, not in the spring. Officers produce reports for me on certain aspects of service routinely, but several key aspects, such as the volunteer hours, events programme, and operation of the camp site, only have the end of year report published at the end of the calendar year for obvious reasons. This is not good timing for this report, and means that data is often partial, or lagged

by up to a year. The committee may wish to consider the timing their request for this report accordingly to see if moving the date of the next report to early spring 2025 would be helpful. It might also prove to be of assistance in terms of updating on reletting details for the street scene contracts.

Open Spaces.

Parks and open spaces- general

Lincoln has retained Green Flag Awards for its three main parks, along with an additional Green Heritage Award in Boultham Park. January is the annual submission time for Green Flag status, and this year we intend to add an extra submission for the City's new Hope Wood. This will add an extra challenge, but I am sure all members wish officers every success with gaining the recognition this exciting project, which will increase the areas identified as key parks, by one. The key parks now being Hartsholme Country park (and Swanholme Lakes), Arboretum, Boultham Park, Birchwood Nature Park and Hope Wood.

Before getting into detail, it is worth noting that Lincoln has continued its plan to established some 20Ha of land for rewilding. These are areas that are transitioning from regularly cut grass to a wildflower encouraging sward. These areas, many of which will now be in there third year of care in this way, can be identified by the length of the grass in the summer. They are allowed to grow up, developing flower and providing habitat, before the grass is cut late summer/autumn, and removed. This removal of the cut grass gradually impoverishes the fertility of the ground, and thereby reduces the ability of the more aggressive plants to smother out the more desirable wildflowers. It takes time, and not all areas are suitable, so some experimentation is required, but this initiative is proving successful in most areas, and is both welcomed and popular with the public generally. It is hoped to expand on this gradually as opportunities permit.

Linked to this, last year I made members aware of the potential impacts of the Environment Act with regards to open spaces, including the need for the Council to begin preparations for the development of Local Nature Recovery Strategies. Although formally vested in LCC as a statutory requirement, it is incumbent on CoLC to develop plans to feed into that, so as to make the plan robust and to ensure that any developer funding arising from Biodiversity Net Gain projects in the city has options to protect and enhance biodiversity within the city's boundaries wherever possible. This work is progressing well, and in partnership with Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust (who are developing a joined-up approach for Lincolnshire) I am pleased to say that we are as well prepared as any. That isn't to say considerable work is not still required, but there is reassurance in that we have a solid foundation with a trusted authoritative body, in readiness to meet our anticipated obligations.

This summer's Citizen Panel satisfaction survey showed satisfaction with general open spaces (very satisfied or just satisfied) at 83.5%. Of the sub sections satisfaction with our management of trees was the lowest score, but still a respectable 71.2% (see arboriculture section below).

The general score is up very slightly on last year (80%), but still down a little on the peak higher scores that we achieved a few years ago. This is encouraging in some ways, but disappointing in others. I feel in that it does not seem to reflect the vast amount of work done in all our open spaces, including at Hope Wood. I have therefore been keen to explore why this is in greater detail, and detailed assessment of individual comments received seem to suggest a perception that our contractor could perform better on our behalf, not least in how they present themselves. I have asked the Assistant Director to take this up with the contractor, and to develop a clear action plan. The requirement for this is highlighted by their contractual score so far this year.

Contractor performance YTD

Indicator	22/23 target	After Q2
Contractor performance points score	50- 150 points	Cumulative 125

We have also discussed the strategic direction of open spaces (see horizon scanning below), and the need for not only a clear plan for the future, but also how we better promote the work of the section and the value of the services. We have expanded our social media profile for parks and open spaces very recently, and need to build on that, and are looking at branding for specific sites and projects.

Key Location - The Arboretum.

Retaining the high standards of past years, it remains as a vital open space for many, especially those local to it in the east of the city. Its fantastic heritage as one of Lincoln's very oldest public spaces means development opportunities will always be restricted, but it remains a valuable asset, fulfilling the same objectives for local residents that parks were intended to do when they were first developed as a concept.

In my last report I noted that the Arboretum Advisory Group was struggling a little for membership/volunteers, and to some extent that is still the case, but there has been some greater interest of late, and whilst still weakened, I'm pleased to say that prospects look more promising than at this stage last year.

Key Location - Boultham Park

Last year I reported on closure of phase one of the Boultham Park project, and this year I'm equally pleased to report successful closure of phase two; the lake restoration. Whilst I am sad to see this project come to an end, the work it has delivered in terms of consolidating and transforming the park for the benefit of the wildlife in that area, and of course wider community, has been truly inspiring.

As a project that has received long term cross-party support, I think the Council as a whole can be genuinely proud of what has been achieved here, and I take this opportunity to thank all those who have supported the projects throughout, including

members, staff, formal partners such as Linkage Trust and Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, as well as the Park Advisory Group, and all the very many volunteers that have made it such a success. Thanks to this collaborative effort it has been possible to sustain the energy necessary to make a wonderful thing happen which has changed lives already, and will continue to do so for many years to come. Long may that remain the case, and be a beacon to what can be achieved when we work this way.

Key Location - Hartsholme Country Park / Swanholme Lakes and the camp site

Still the top-ranking park in terms of visitor numbers, the site continues to suffer from the pressures of high demand. This is evident from such as the widening of pathways, and the exposure of tree roots in pathways, simply due to wear. This is adding to pressures of work for the ranger service at the site, and adding a pressure to budgets which is being closely monitored.

2023 has seen major investment in the lake outlet. The need to expand the capacity for outflow was identified in the routine reservoir inspections, but the challenge has been how to do this reliably, at the lowest cost, and with the least disruption. Ultimately a suitable plan was developed which involved some significant engineering work. I am pleased to say that staff have project managed the contract for this work well, and the outcome has of course been tested recently in the wide spread flood events. The new outlet proved to work well, and while we cannot say that it will always prevent flooding of the area, we have met our statutory obligations, which should give local residents some comfort I hope.

However, our work relating to flooding in the park does not stop there, and on the back of the recent events we will be both looking at the flood plan we have, the communications we action surrounding that, and also at what else, if anything, we can do. Whilst we do not own all the land/water courses in the area, it is recognised that flood events are likely to become more prevalent in the future, and so we plan to map land ownerships, and seek co-operation to ensure that all dykes and ditches in the area are adequately maintained wherever possible.

I am pleased to report that this year Hartsholme has not been subjected to incursions by unauthorised encampments. Last year an additional automatic pop-up bollard was added to the existing ramp and CCTV cameras as an additional security measure. Whilst stopping such access into a public car park and camp site can never be stopped completely, it seems that the extra measures taken may have had a positive deterrent effect. Only time will tell.

Unfortunately, these deterrents do not cover the entrance close to the road, and so were of no effect in deterring two notable thefts of contractor vehicles while they were working on the installation of the new dam outflow. Whilst the loss of this plant/equipment was a setback, it did not prevent completion of the works close to programme, and so I can now confirm that not only has the outlet been expanded in line with the council's legal requirements to do so, as required by the reservoirs inspector, but we also have installed telemetry which will alert officers if water levels get so high as to pose a risk of flooding. This should in turn permit the council to warn local residences much more quickly than would have been the case previously, should

a flood risk event ever occur. I hope members will consider the investment in the expansion of the outlet and the early warning telemetry a wise investment given the effects of climate change now been seen in all walks of life.

The camp site operational have all but returned to normal now, post covid, but it seems from the annual camp site report, that last year actual usage was still recovering. Whilst up again on the previous year, we were still to see a recovery to pre-2019 levels, which represented our highest levels of use so far. We are presently at about 76% of 2019 in terms of income. However, things look positive, and anecdotal feedback on use in 2023 looks promising, dispute the prolonged periods of wet weather.

Some good note-worthy results have been seen in relation to the PODS on site, with usage up , and it has been pleasing to see satisfaction with those using the site being high. With respect to cleanliness, staff and value for money they all scored over 90%.

Also good to see is that 63% of users had been before, and 97% said they would stay at Hartsholme again in the future.

Development of a Master Plan for the site, although currently un-resourced, does remain as an objective of the council within its strategic plan.

Key location - Commons

This year has seen significant work take place on the commons; all of this being reported to the Commons Advisory Panel (CAP), as is normal practice. The commons continue to benefit from additional income derived from an agreement with LCFC for car parking on match days, with this income set aside for work on the commons. The CAP are routinely given options and have set priorities for the income, and this is aligned with the Commons Management Plan.

The work of Carholme Golf Club (CGC) operating as they do on West Common land, have been a subject of discussion at CAP as they have still to develop an Environmental Management Plan, as is required of them. Some members of CAP attended a CGC committee meeting to try and press home the importance of them progressing to a more sustainable form of course management. They have committed to abide by the terms of their lease, and I hope for an improved position over coming months.

Key location - Hope Wood

This new site is progressing well as a key plank in the Council strategy to provide more natural habitat in the city. The accessible land can be visited off Newark Road, via the cycle way, and sits adjacent Boultham Park. The project is making use of Levelling Up parks funding and is seeing a 3.5Ha site of low lying poorly grazed grassland transformed into a nature reserve with tree and shrub planting.

Last year's tree planting formed phase 1, and is establishing well, and the area to be recovered and planted will be extended this year as a part of phase 2. Again, it will be volunteers who are doing the planting.

Additionally, some interpretation boards are being brought to site shortly, along with a new sign, based loosely on some of those seen in Boultham Park, giving the site its own clear identity.

It will take some years to establish, but the site is already taking on the look of an informal nature site and attracting visitors. This is another exciting development in support of the council's climate change aims.

The project is being delivered in conjunction with the Woodland Trust, and with support from Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust.

Key locations - Allotments

As at the end of September 2023 the council's allotments had an occupancy rate of 95%. Those not let are in low lying areas that cannot be gardened without significant investment in terms of drainage. This level of performance will not therefore be exceeded in the near future.

All plots that can be used are being used, or are in the process of reletting, and there continues to be a steady demand for allotment tenancies which is expected to increase if the cost-of-living crisis continues in the long-term.

Working with the North Lincoln Horticultural society we are to trial a revised letting process based on an 'open day' system. Traditionally we have stuck to a waiting list system, with those longest on the list getting priority. That won't change, but we will seek to accelerate the time taken for making a decision, as some who are given an option on a plot take a very long time to decide they don't want it. On such occasions the plot can become overgrown before it is let, making it unnecessarily harder for a new tenant, or even putting prospective tenants off.

Alongside this we are exploring use of volunteers to tidy plots, and/or assist those who are having trouble maintaining their plot. This initiative is in its infancy, but we hope it will develop into a self-help system for allotment communities.

Last year I reported that we would be tightening up on enforcing plot maintenance, post covid. We have done this gradually and continue to press on with this, incrementally tightening up the rules again. Few objections have been received so far, and it has been broadly welcomed.

Key locations - Equipped Play Areas

The Council maintains 28 equipped play areas across the city, ensuring that British Standards are maintained at all times for installation, inspections and maintenance.

High levels of responsibility and care unfortunately means relatively high costs, and this does impact on the council's ability to expand the service and expedite repairs at times. Working closely with the Property Services section, who order the repairs, safety is always the number one concern for this service. It is necessary to close play areas off at times, and officers are under clear instruction not to bow to public pressure to re-open sites unless the necessary safety requirements are in place.

The major refurbishment of Whitton's Park play area was competed, and declared a success, only for that acclaim to be dashed by faltering issues with the new zip wire. The result has been sporadic closure of parts of the equipment, leading to a robust exchange with the installation company. I am pleased to say that they have responded well now, and the outstanding issues have been addressed. No further problems are anticipated for this site.

Key location - John Dawber Gardens

This important site, commemorating as it does some of the city's historic twinning links, has been in need of refurbishment. Last year I reported that we had been approached by a local group who are in the process of establishing a formal charitable trust with the aim of taking on and attracting funding for the site's rejuvenation.

I am pleased to say that this has come to fruition now as a partnership, and the group have agreed and taken up a management agreement for the site. We have been happy to work with them on formalising this, and with agreeing aspects of ongoing support. Their work is already clearly visible in the improvements on site, which are magnificent to see.

Events and Activities

In 2023 from January to November a total of 11,000 individuals (approximately 4100 Park organised and 6900 self-led) attended events held at Hartsholme Country Park and Swanholme Lakes Local Nature Reserve, Boultham Park and the Arboretum. A total of 70 park-led events and 400 self-led events have been held to date.

The most well attended self-led events held at Hartsholme to present were the weekly walking groups which use the network of paths within the park and had 1700 individuals attend.

Other organisations which held events at Hartsholme came from a variety of sources which included, the University of Lincoln, Hartsholme Electric Model Boat Club (HEMBC), local schools and charities such as the RSPB and British institute for the Deaf (BID),

Again, this year we hosted several networking and picnic type of events held by the Ukrainian Culture Centre which have provided invaluable support for the community and the incoming families. Also, several events to increase a sense of wellbeing and mental health have taken place within the parks such as yoga, Sketching for wellbeing and silent discos.

The Park-led event participants most favoured in the annual events calendar to date was undoubtedly the easter egg hunt (780). Disappointingly the Halloween Trail was cancelled this year due to storm Babet rendering most of the footpaths unusable.

Other events with high attendance figures in the 2023 included Toddler Time (200), and several adult activities such as the History events, Easter Wreaths and Obelisk workshops, also attracted good attendance figures.

Education

In total 1290 people to date (Ranger Led 590 and Self Led 700) attended an educational visit at Hartsholme Country Park and Swanholme Lakes Local Nature Reserve.

In total twelve groups came from a variety of sources which included several local and non-local schools and the Home Education network and Lincolnshire County Council.

Self-guided educational events which proved popular in 2023 had 700 individuals taking part in a wide range of activities including Shelter building, Orienteering and self-guided walks on various subjects.

The most popular Ranger led activity undertaken in 2023 was Terrific Trees and Mini Beast Hunt, followed equally by Shelter Building, and Woodland Art.

In 2023 a continuation of the already successful education program which took place at Hartsholme was expanded to Boultham Park. Thirty-six events (1080 individuals) to date have been programmed in and delivered within Boultham Park by the Education Ranger in partnership with the Boultham Park Restoration Project and a local school (Sir Francis Hill), and local Scout, Cub, and Beavers groups as part of the Outdoor Classroom Project.

Volunteering

In more recent years all volunteering for open spaces has been co-ordinated through a single post, ensuring consistency of approach in-line with Council policies, and co-ordination of resources. The development of this role has been invaluable to the Council and it has grown over time, to the extent that it is now at capacity.

The Volunteer coordinator submits an annual update on performance/progress at the end of the year, so one has not been produced yet for 2023. However, I am pleased to report the outcomes in terms of volunteer hours from 2022 below. These are easy to capture when we have large groups for a fixed period, but less easy to measure when people give time in less structured ways, so we know for example that the efforts of the Park Advisory Groups are not always captured. For this reason these should be considered to be slightly low, but they remain a great indicator as to how important volunteers are, and how highly we value their engagement and support.

Boultham Park total volunteer hours=1246

Hartsholme Country Park total volunteer hours=2175

Birchwood Nature Park total volunteer hours=522

Swanholme Lakes total volunteer hours=420

Commons total volunteer hours=296

Total Hours for all sites 2022 = 4695

It has been especially pleasing this year to see, not just the long term established stalwarts at places like Hartsholme and Boultham fully finding their feet again after covid, but also new groups established and committed to sites like Hope Wood. Figures for them will of course come through in next year's report.

As is becoming customary now, through this report I would very much like to give my thanks to all those who willingly give their time in support of open spaces in the city. This may be by work as a member of a Park Advisory Group, or by direct action in delivery tasks on site with the Volunteer Co-Ordinator. It may even be by time they give to other organisations who do good works in the parks. All of them deserve recognition for helping to look after and maximise the benefits that can be derived from open spaces.

Arboriculture

This last year has seen an increasing pressure on tree services, both in terms of advice and works.

The Council's two arboricultural officers have dealt with many requests (some of which are by necessity very detailed), in relation to planning applications and conservation area consents, as well as the wider and more general requests.

They have, so far this year, received 426 direct case requests/enquiries. They have also filed reports on 96 TPO cases. In addition they have addressed 19 other planning related enquiries.

This has resulted in the issue of 512 orders for works so far, all of which have to be monitored and assessed for accuracy/quality.

With regret, by necessity their work involves removing some trees for a wide range of reasons, but it also involves the planting of trees too, as required by Council policy.

Over winter 2022/23 I'm pleased to report that the Council planted 110 trees to replace losses from the 2022 year, and additionally, over 1000 new trees and shrubs were planted in the new park at Hope Wood.

This calendar year, the number of trees removed (including in schedules submitted to Planning Committee to 30th of November 2023) is 164 so far. Unfortunately the Sooty Bark Disease outbreak has compounded that number significantly, requiring another 98 trees to be removed, many of which were either dead or succumbing to the disease. This year's tree planting programme will, as usual, be no less than one tree for each tree removed.

Of special note this year, over and above routine works, we have addressed three important issues.

Firstly, members may be aware that our contractor was having difficulty resourcing arboricultural work, with the result that significant delays were being seen in waiting for works after orders were placed. Whilst sympathetic to any organisation who cannot find the necessary skilled staff to fulfil contractual obligations, the outcomes were not acceptable. This was raised at the highest levels with the contractor, who has drawn on wider resources, advertised more widely, and ultimately been able to develop a second tree works team. Delays for work are now back within tolerances, although still under strain, not least due to the pressure created by Sooty Bark Disease (see below).

Secondly, we have encountered a very problematic tree disease this year, which goes by what is perhaps the deceptively friendly name of Sooty Bark Disease (SBD). This disease, which is most prevalent in affecting the genus *Acer* (so includes such common trees as Sycamore and Norway maple) is increasingly common. However, it can be slow to emerge, and healthy trees are less susceptible than weakened one. Last year's long dry summer led to many trees being weakened, so the disease was able to overcome many trees and have a much bigger impact than would normally be the case. This was especially notable in areas where a high number of *Acers* are found, such as Hartsholme Country Park. Making the problem more pressing and complex was the need to handle the diseased trees and timber with special care, as the spores from the disease fungi can affect people if they are susceptible to respiratory issues.

A specific action plan was therefore drawn up and has been delivered. Replacement trees are being ordered to be planted this winter. *Acers* will of course be avoided.

Although some infected trees are still being identified, and will continue to be so indefinitely now, no further large scale clearances are expected.

The third point of note in this section is the progress made on proactive tree surveys. Usually reactive only, the Council now has a proactive tree survey budget, and it is the intention that all City Council owned trees (wherever the responsibility for the tree has not been vested in another body by way of lease or tenancy agreement) will receive a cyclic inspection. These are being documented, and all works recorded for future reference. Members will note the size and scale of the task, but it is hoped that with just a few years now the Council will have mapped and have data on all trees in the city, aiding us to improve their care, and so better protect them as an asset for future generations.

Finally, I would make members aware that whilst the council has a policy for open space and tree management, it has not been reviewed for some years. It is my intention that a dedicated policy for tree care be brought forwards this next year.

Travellers

In recent years the council has suffered a number of unauthorised encampments by the traveller community. The numbers fluctuate. In 2021 we had four incursions, but in 2022 this fell to one, although a secondary attempt to access some land was thwarted. In 2023, up to the time of drafting, we have had no encampments.

In 2021 we began a programme of 'target hardening', in an attempt to make access by such encampments more difficult. This has included a new automated pop-up bollard in Hartsholme, and a new heavy weight height barrier at the entrance to Skellingthorpe Road playing fields. We are aware that one group tried to gain access to the Skellingthorpe Road field, but it seems the new barrier was a suitable deterrent, so they went elsewhere. The work to add further deterrents is continuing.

Local Landscapes, Hidden Histories

I cannot close the open spaces section of my report relating to open spaces without updating members on an important new initiative; that of Local Landscapes, Hidden Histories (formerly called Lincoln's Green Museum). This project has arisen on the back of learning from the Arboretum restoration, and of course most recently Boultham Park's restoration. It also dovetails well with established history recording in Hartsholme Park.

In essence it is a three year project that seeks to engage the public in the important history of some of our key parks and open spaces, by imaginative means. It also has as a key objective, not only uncovering more of the history of the sites, but also recording them in a formal archive system. Key partners include Bishop Grosseteste University, Lincoln University, and a wider range of established heritage bodies in the city.

An events/activities programme for next year will be published shortly, and all members are of course welcome to engage and attend these.

This is a very exciting project for the city that will mean the Council can establish an accessible archive of all we know about our key parks and open spaces, but more than that, it offers a great opportunity to promote these sites and hopefully reach people who might not otherwise have used them. The benefits of using open spaces responsibly and respectfully do, as we all know, bring real and lasting benefits for both individuals and communities.

Horizon scanning

Mindful of the pressures on our open spaces, and resources more generally, I have been discussing with officers the need for us to be able to take a longer term approach, so we can plan our resources as effectively as possible.

We have agreed that a high level overarching open spaces strategy would be helpful, but that, because of existing pressures on or resources, we cannot wait for that before putting other aspects of policy in place more quickly. So, although perhaps not coming forwards in the order I would have preferred, members will have seen that a policy for income generation for open spaces has already been consulted upon. A complex issue in itself given the range of possible sites, the options for use, and the potential 'customers', this first attempt at a policy will, I am sure, need further refining based on learning from its application. It is however, potentially, a catalyst for greater change if we can develop new income streams, large and small, in support of our parks and open spaces. Members are invited to note that any/all income achieved is ring-fenced for this purpose. Beyond the adoption of the income policy, an action plan is also required to ensure opportunities are properly developed.

I have also asked officers to draft a policy for tree care. Tree care is a hot topic currently, and a vital aspect of the Council's environmental ambitions. I feel it will be helpful to make transparent how we will be looking after this asset now, and for future generations.

Street Scene

This section covers a wide range of services prominently, but not exclusively, associated with cleansing and waste management.

Infrastructure.

This includes the provision and maintenance of street name plates, art installations, and the maintenance of bus shelters. The city currently has 111 bus shelters (66 Adshell/ 45 City Council), and 29 pieces cared for as art installations, of varying sizes, spread across the city.

Historically there are two tiers of bus shelter provision. A contract for free provision of those where the advertising pays for the shelter, and those which the council has to manage and pay for. The budget for council-provided bus shelters was removed a number of years ago, when it was acknowledged that these should be a county highways function, and the city Council could no longer afford to maintain bus shelters. LCC has not adopted the shelters, so as a stop gap, shelters damaged beyond repair are removed, and we continue to seek imaginative way to maintain and protect what we can. Ultimately the second tier of bus shelters will be removed over time unless other funding sources can be found.

Waste/Recycling

In terms of statistical performance of existing services, performance remains acceptable. Please note that data is always lagged. This report reflects data up to end of June 2023 (Q1).

Domestic general (residual) waste disposed of has reduced again, year on year. (this includes for growth in new properties). The winter season will be a slightly higher

volume, as is usual, but it is not expected to offset the fall, which is a trend expected to continue as a result of the financial climate.

Financial years

20/21	547.6 Kg /pa	136.9 Kg/hh av per Q
21/22	530 Kg/pa	132.5 kg/hh av per Q
22/23	507.5Kg/pa	126.89Kg/hh av per Q

Bucking the trend, the number of residents using the garden waste service has increased this year. There has been a gradual decline in numbers which is thought to have been as a result in a drop in disposable income, but this year has thrown up something of an anomaly. The marketing has been stronger this year, highlighting the benefits of the green bin scheme, and it might be that residents are now realising that the charge offers excellent value for money, compared with paying a contractor to dispose of the waste, or the time and effort required to take the waste to a HWRC. No increase in the charge is proposed for next year at this time.

Number of bins being emptied:

2017	18,241
2018	17,794
2019	17,405
2020	17,514
2021	17,744
2022	16,785
2023	18,559

The increased buy-in to the green waste service seen above (calendar year) has not yet been reflected in the data for tonnages collected (see below) which reflects April 22 to March 23.

Financial years

20/21	6231.28 Tonnes	16.17% of total waste stream
21/22	5787.32 Tonnes	15.65% of total waste stream
22/23	4740.00 Tonnes	13.68% of total waste stream

The fall last year is in line with the drop in customers to that point. As the general domestic waste tonnages are down, and so are recycling tonnages (see below), there are grounds to suggest that the vast majority of garden wastes is still going into HWRCs.

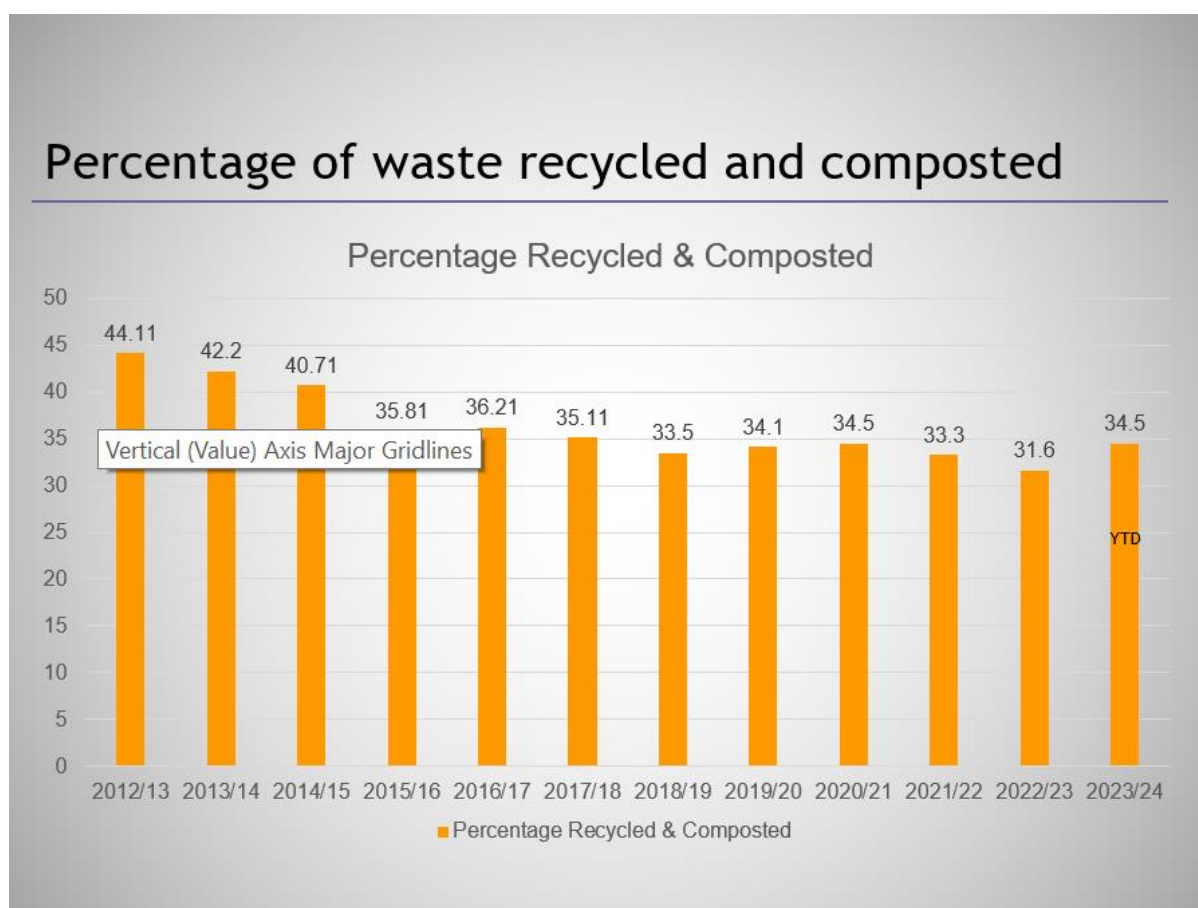
Recycling tonnages

Below are the tonnages collected in MDR after contamination has been removed. The fall reflects the picture for general domestic waste.

Financial years

20/21	7048.09 Tonnes	18.29%	of total waste stream
21/22	6543.86 Tonnes	17.70 %	of total waste stream
22/23	6193.00 Tonnes	17.88%	of total waste stream

The graph below shows combined performance and suggests that there has been a general levelling out of performance in the low to mid 30s. The final bar representing 2022/3 is not indicative of actual outturn for the year yet, as it only takes data to the end of June 2023.



Undesirable materials (contamination) are still being found in significant quantities in the MDR. LCC's data, which has traditionally been derived from the MDR processing contractor, has suggested this for some time. As government has now prescribed a national standard for the sampling method, LCC have moved to a new system of sampling. The early results seem to suggest that, whilst different to that reported by the contractor, there are still very high levels of 'contamination' being found, especially on certain days/rounds.

Joint comms teams continue to work on education programmes, and our own staff, working with the contractor, are escalating the numbers of bins being rejected due to contamination found within bins. Contamination is expensive for LCC to handle, so joint work, which will aid CoLC's recycling rate, and assist LCC's cost burden is of mutual benefit.

For clarity, whilst numerous indicators are collected and reviewed for the service as a part of day to day operations, the departmental KPIs are:

Indicator	Q1 outturn	(April – June)
Percentage of Waste Recycled /composted	(target)34% to 37%	35.54%
Contractor performance points score	50 to 150 points	(low is good) 125

Imminent changes.

The Lincolnshire Waste Partnership has been active this last year in the delivery of the action plan underpinning the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Lincolnshire (JMWMS). This document prioritises the work which drives change for waste services across the county, and ensures a joined-up approach is taken, so reducing any risks of confusion.

The plan is now due for refresh, but the main aims are unlikely to be changed greatly.

At the request of LCC districts have, over recent years, been looking at options for the introduction of separate paper and card collections. Often referred to as ‘twin stream’, these collections have a separate (purple-lidded bin), whose emptying alternates every fortnight with the collection of the mixed dry recyclate (MDR). So, for residents in a 240L standard wheeled bin area, this means weekly collections based on: week 1 - Residual waste. week 2- MDR week 3- Residual waste week 4 - Paper and card. The cycle then repeats.

This keeps paper and card cleaner, and so reduces contamination, which aids recycling rates. As the commodity is cleaner it gives the disposal authority (LCC) an income, rather than a disposal cost.

In Lincoln the collections are not as simple as for many neighbouring districts, as due to the urban compact nature of many of our streets, over a third of the city are on smaller bins with weekly collections. The usual system could not therefore be applied for these areas. Additionally, we have noted that LCC have asked for a number of additional conditions attached to the introduction of the extra purple-lidded bins, such as a strict enforcement code with supporting actions, to keep contamination low. This work, and other associated actions with having an extra 30,000 bins in circulation (IF we just did 240L areas), would require extra resources at a cost to CoLC. Given our budgetary constraints, taking on an additional cost burden at this time is not possible. We have therefore asked LCC what financial support they might make available, given that this work will cut their costs and bring them a new income stream. Positive discussions are ongoing.

Over and above the local action plan, we have of course been awaiting clarity on the implications arising from the Environment Act 2021, which proposed some fundamental changes in a few key areas of waste/recycling policy. Covid has delayed this, but the initial national consultation concluded, leading to an announcement in late October on a few key issues.

Things we already knew:

1. A public body will be established to collect income from packaging companies for dissemination to those dealing with the effects /processing of waste packaging (Councils).
2. To obtain funding councils will be required to prove they are operating “effectively and efficiently”, which will be predicated on a consistent list of materials.
3. We will be required to collect food waste weekly (timescale for implementation was to be determined)

Important points of note about the above.

Point 1. Levels of funding are not yet set out, but where income is being achieved this will be netted off against costs.

Point 2. Will be assessed, but the exact criteria remains unclear.

New information:

1. Food waste collections will be a statutory requirement for all households, and must be introduced by no later than April 2026
2. Free garden waste services will not be part of the legislation. All organic waste can go into the same collection. Garden waste services must be provided fortnightly (at least 26 per year).
3. There is a clear materials list that must be collected as recycling, but there is no requirement to separate these into different bins (as many Council s do).A MDR collection, as we have in Lincoln, is acceptable and no additional justification for this is required (a TEEP assessment- see below).
4. Plastic film will be added to the list by no later then April 2027.

Important points of note about the above.

1. Food collections will be the biggest upheaval in our waste steam management for many years. It is about an extra 2.4 million collections each year. New burdens funding will be subject to the Council proving collections are “effective and efficient” but they haven’t said what that means yet.
2. No pressure for kerbside sortation (the way to get the highest recycling rates but at the highest cost). Removing the need for Councils to report why they collect the way they do under a Technical, Environmental, Economical Practicality (TEEP) assessment is helpful and gives us greater flexibility.
3. The recycling materials list is confirmed as the same as we understood it to be, so no change there for now, but the addition of taking plastic film from April 2027 is noted.

The impact of this, and the pressure that will be exerted on waste /recycling services in the next few years should not be underestimated. Not only are we in the process of reletting these contracts now, with a new contract starting September 2026, but before then, unless the legislation changes again to include for some greater flexibility, we will potentially need to implement food waste collections to every house, and, if ultimately LCC wish to fund paper and card collections, see if that can be adopted too.

Certainly, challenges lie ahead of us now, and this is without reference to any other initiatives we may wish to implement to try to improve our recycling rate, as the national challenge is still 55% by 2025 and 65% by 2035.

I wish to be active in pursuit of these challenging goals on behalf of the Council, but will have to be realistic about what can be achieved with the resources we have. This is the subject of ongoing planning discussions with senior officers.

Central to, and of course most important to us within the work on programming is the effect of the contract letting timetables, and it is not lost on me that we will now need to look at bringing in food waste collections before the end of the existing contract. I will not rehearse the difficulties of the predicament here, as most will be obvious, but I have asked officers to contact DEFRA to make them aware that this is troublesome, and potentially costly for us. It will also potentially impact our ability to be “effective and efficient” for the funding programme.

The response has been unequivocal that there will be no dispensation or transitional allowance for Lincoln, so we remain instructed to comply.

As a footnote to the new legislative requirements, I should make brief note of a new digital waste tracking system that is being implemented nationally, as a part of a program to tighten the issue of waste licenses/permitting.

Horizon scanning

To a large extent the immediate future for these services has been prescribed by government. However, whilst the new policies set out what government will and will not mandate, they are not transparent on exactly how it expects each authority to reach the challenging national targets. So, looking beyond what is essential for us in terms of the drafting and letting of the new contracts, and the introduction of food waste collections (and other associated lesser changes required), we do need to retain a focus on reducing the volumes of waste produced, and contamination levels within what is produced. It is accepted that the Council is only one player in one makes up the complex waste production, collection, and processing stream, but none the less it has influence beyond just collecting the wastes, and I believe it must continue to show leadership in the promotion of waste reduction and recycling initiatives. I hope to be able to expand this work via various media sources in the next few years, to showcase our good work and ease the necessary transitions in services.

Street Cleansing

This section covers all areas of street cleansing, including street sweeping, litter picking, litter bin emptying, fly tipping, and the removal of graffiti and abandoned vehicles.

In the summer Citizens Panel survey 2023, 69.5% of respondents who expressed a view reported being very or fairly satisfied with the cleanliness of the city, a small fall

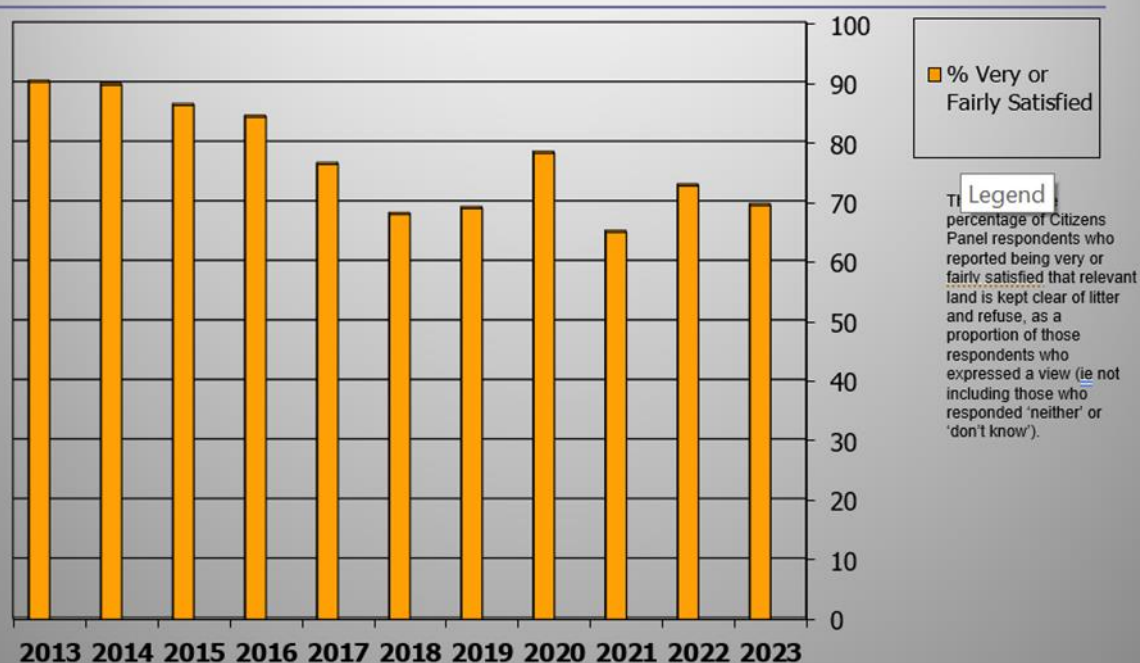
of 3.3% on last year, but last year was up a little on the year before, suggesting a norm around this level has been established.

I will be working closely with the staff and contractor to seek out further incremental improvements this next year. Assessment of the feedback provided means that the focus will continue to be on leaf clearance work, fly tipping, and graffiti.

For clarity, whilst numerous indicators are collected and reviewed for the service the departmental KPIs are:

Indicator	22/23 target	Latest recorded outturns (may not be full year)
Contractor performance points score	50 to 150 points	70 Q2
Satisfaction with cleansing services	68% to 78%	69.5%

Satisfaction with Cleanliness



Graffiti

Under lockdown we saw a drop in graffiti, but alas that has not been sustained. We remain committed to graffiti removal as a mainstay of showing commitment to a clean environment. However, getting graffiti cleared is not easy, as much of it is on private property, and as such it is the landowner's responsibility to clear it or at least to give permission for us to do so. Some choose not to, and others won't respond to offers of help from the council.

The below includes all graffiti removed (apart from utility boxes) so far this year. The figures are consistent with an average year.

2023 Non-Offensive Graffiti – 37 cases

2023 Offensive Graffiti – 9 cases

TOTAL = 46

This year has seen us trial some solar compactor bins. Six bins are now operating in the High Street, located where we are aware we get the most litter, and the highest number of complaints about overflowing litter bins. These bins use the electrical power harvested from the sun to drive a compacting arm within the bin, so they can take several times more material than a standard bin. This means that bins don't need emptying so often, and therefore remain accessible for longer.

These bins are more expensive to rent (but can be bought), but can be cost effective by reducing the amount of emptying required, and of course improving the quality of an area. Being a 'smart bin' means that it measures how full it is, and every time the doors are opened for emptying. This data is transmitted to staff, so they can see how each bin is performing, and when it needs emptying/attention.

We are working with Biffa to assess their viability, and expect to make a longer term decision on them later next year. To this point they have proven well used and popular.



Horizon scanning.

As a part of the preparations for the new contracts I have considered at some length what we might face in the term of the next contract. Waste/recycling are fast changing areas of work, but less so street cleansing. However, that does not mean it won't be subject to change and new demands, as aspirations grow. I therefore think that the exploration of new ideas is wise, and the innovation offered by such as compactor bins has real potential.

I am also especially keen that we look at the disposal of litter wastes. At the moment we are unable to recycle these in any way, but I feel this is a lost opportunity, and whilst current cultures (not to mention disposal contracts) prevent it, I believe that it is something that will emerge in the next few years, and we would be well to be preparing for this.

Finally, I have asked officers to pay special attention to the rise in the number of shopping trolleys now blighting some areas of the city. Officers are exploring legal routes to recharge supermarkets for their return, as an incentive for the supermarkets to take action. I expect to be able to report positive progress on this in my next report.

Public Toilets

Following the delivery of the required savings plan, as expected, resilience is now much depleted adding to the burdens on remaining staff. The cause has been the inability to recruit to a post, which despite numerous adverts, has not yet yielded a suitable candidate. We are hopeful that, with the changing jobs market, a high quality candidate can be secured soon.

Charges of 20p per use have been in operation at the Bus station, Castle Square and Tentercroft street since January 2017, and the table below shows the income received so far. It does not cover the cost of provision, but is of help to offset operating costs. Covid lockdowns affected income at times, as can clearly be seen below.

	Castle	Lucy Tower	Tentercroft Street	Bus Station	TOTAL
2016/17	£1,731.93	£988.20			£2,720.13
2017/18	£10,029.31	£4,588.02	£917.65	£3,115.35	£18,650.33
2018/19	£8,354.97	£2,278.05	£9,176.03	£17,843.46	£37,652.51
2019/20	£8,380.77	£172*	£9,207.88	£18,179.43	£35,940.08
2020/21	£6,134.30	£0	£77	£12,806.74	£19,018.04
2021/22	£9,587.07	£0	£8,504.37	£20,508.21	£38,599.65
2022/23	£5,530.17	£0	£7,134.45	£16,176.74	£28,841.36
2023/24 (end Oct)	£3,853.83	£0	£3,646.46	£8,753.09	£16,252.83

This service has again achieved high standards for those facilities entered into the Loo of the Year awards, with Tentercroft and Castle Square achieving Platinum standard, and the Bus Station achieving Platinum Plus standard.

Community Centres and Recreation Grounds.

Recreation and Leisure Team

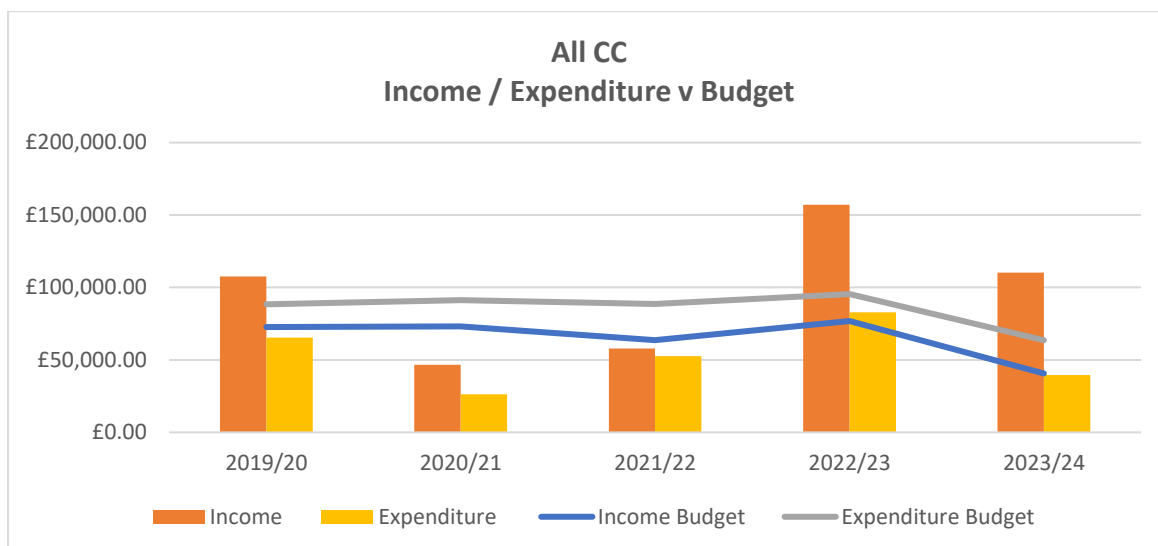
Community Centres

1. Since my report last year, the stock of Community Centres operated by the City Council has been reduced by one facility. A longterm lease was agreed with the YMCA for St Giles Community Centre from September 2023. St Giles CC will see a £1.5 million investment in the fabric of the building. The YMCA will supplement this capital investment with a comprehensive programme of activities particularly targeted at the young people in the area. We are hopeful that this work will be completed, and the newly refurbished St Giles re-opened by the end of 2024
2. The remaining Community Centres have experienced a continuing growth in their usage, footfall has increased at all Community Centres, particularly for use by community groups, health, sport, education, training, religion and party bookings.

All CC Community Provision (Hourly Usage Q1 & Q2)			
	2022-23	2023-24	% Increase
Community	541.5	628.25	16%
Health	1159	2948.5	154%
Sport	671.25	709.25	6%
Education	19.5	83.5	328%
Training	60	384.25	540%
Religion	147	899.75	512%
Environment	0	0	0%
Music	255.25	243.75	-5%
Party	28	54	93%
Total Hours Usage	2881.5	5951.25	107%



3. All Community Centres now have Wi-Fi connections available to hirers, this has proved to be a popular addition for new and existing hirers.
4. The number of hirers undertaking keyholder training thus avoiding extra caretaker charges has also increased, thus reflecting this year-on-year increase in demand.



Office Space within Community Centres

Local Community Centres are not solely available for the use of community groups, sport, training and religion. There is also the opportunity to use the facilities for office space within the local community.

City of Lincoln Council employees may benefit from having a local space available to meet with residents or an accessible area to complete work outside of City Hall. This provision would negate the time spent travelling between sites, City Hall and car parking provision.

Many companies have Head Offices based in larger cities and require an office to meet with Lincoln based employees, for appraisal, one to one meetings and disciplinary requirements.

The small meeting rooms at Bud Robinson, Sudbrooke Drive and Moorland Community Centres are ideal for this provision and now hirer Wi-Fi is available at all centres, upon request, the areas are very desirable.

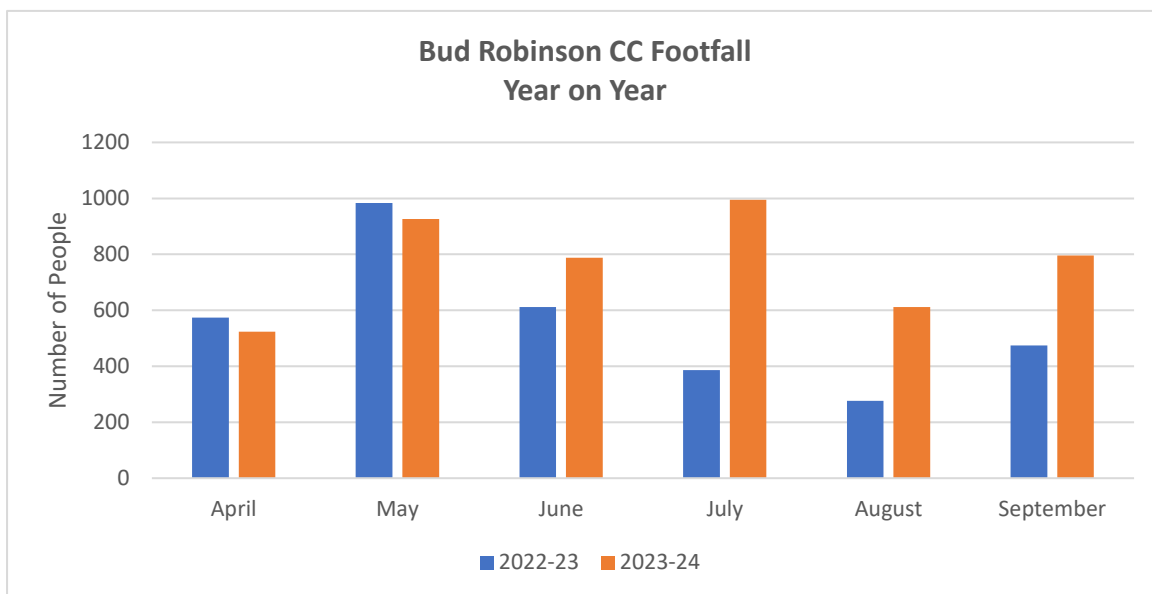
Bud Robinson Community Centre

Growth (new bookings)

The growth is in meeting room booking requests, the plus point to using the Bud Robinson CC is that a caretaker is not required between the hours of 8am and 5pm, this makes the charges competitive price to businesses.

Bud Robinson Community Centre is also used on a regular basis by community groups, such as the Alzheimer's Society and Forget Me Not Café who offer support and guidance to families and people living with dementia.

*(other booking categories are shown in the overview of all centres later in the report).



Grandstand Community Centre

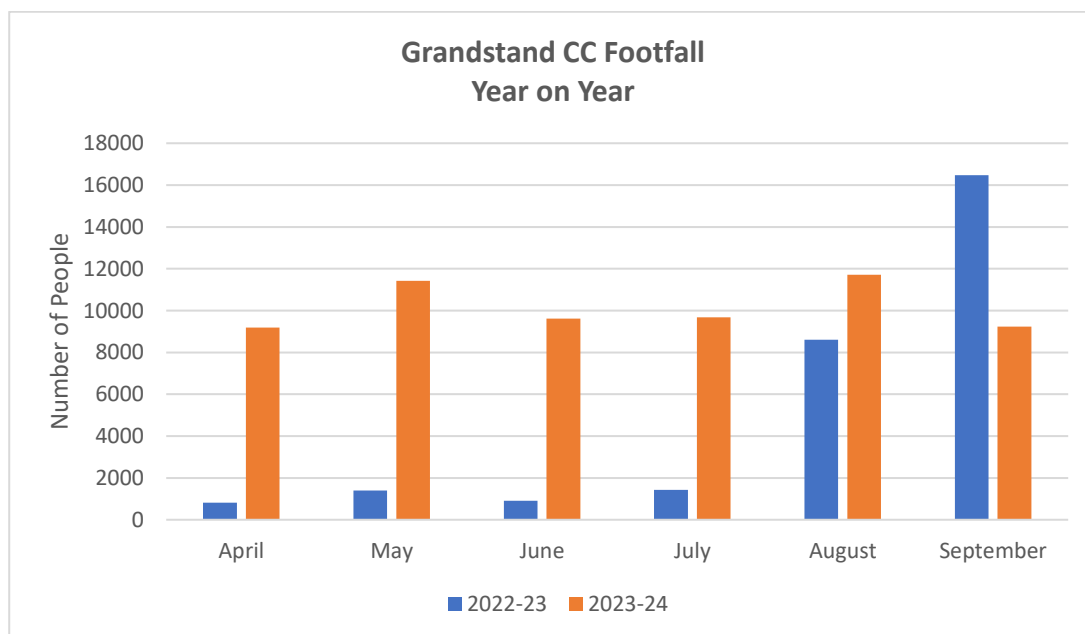
Growth (new bookings)

One off bookings are rising as an example, AA Record Fairs – a commercial booking offering vinyl record sales, from national dealers, all in one room.

The continuation of existing groups such as Slimming World – promoting a healthy lifestyle to encourage weight loss.

The NHS Vaccination Centre is currently active with the Autumn COVID vaccination schedule. Bookings currently go up to the end of March 2024.

*(other booking categories are shown in the overview of all centres later in the report).



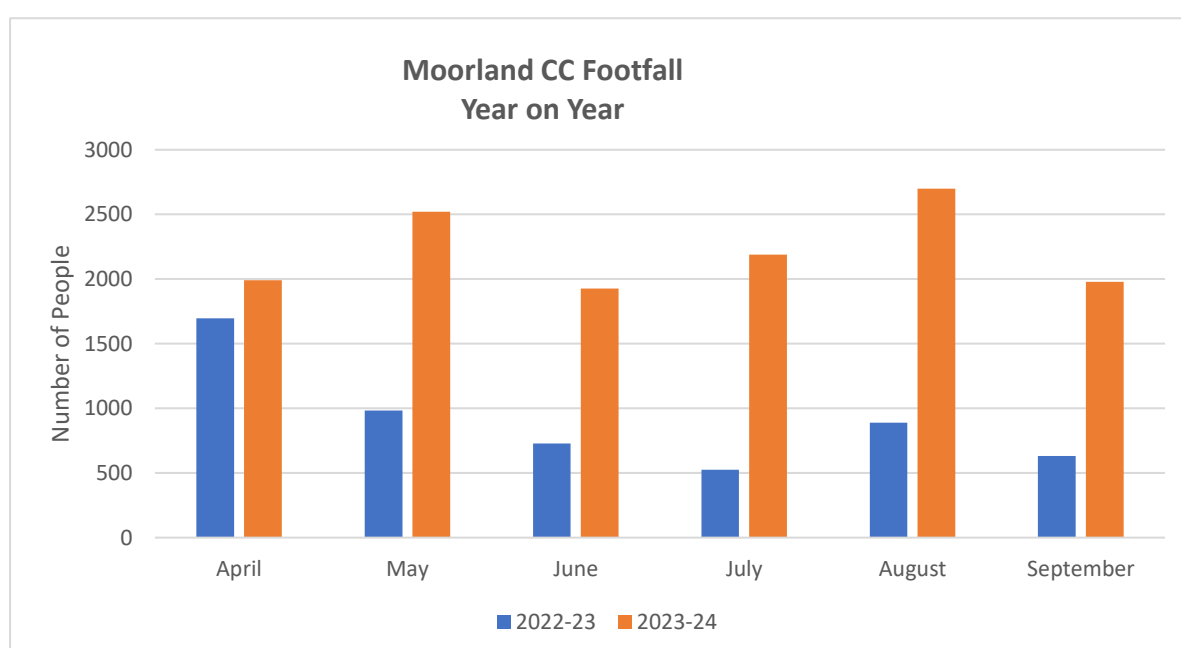
Moorland Community Centre

Growth (new bookings)

Positive Futures – From September 2023, offer a weekly, term time youth/sport provision.

A temporary booking from the Moorland Children's Centre after suffering a devastating blow to their usual venue when they experienced serious flooding. Temporarily their affected provision moved into Moorland Community Centre throughout Q1 and Q2 to ensure they were able to continue offering Early Year's children's services to the local area.

*(other booking categories are shown in the overview of all centres later in the report).



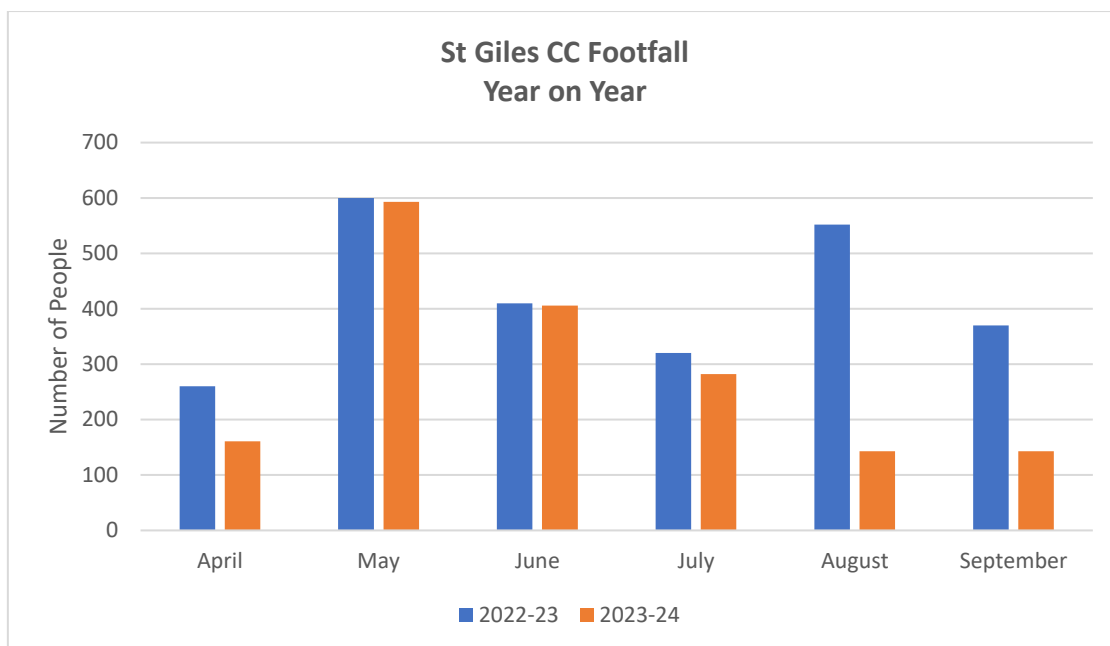
St Giles Community Centre

Use of the centre pre handover.

The transfer of St Giles Community Centre to the YMCA was officially completed on the 18th September 2023.

Regular bookings were offered available space at other community centres to continue their community provision with the closest being Sudbrooke Drive Community Centre. A number of these bookings, Ward Surgeries, Consilium Training, Positive Futures and LCC Youth Club, were unable to transfer due to funding constraints requiring them to remain on St Giles Estate.

Badminton bookings were successfully transferred to Sudbrooke Drive Community Centre.



Sudbrooke Drive Community Centre

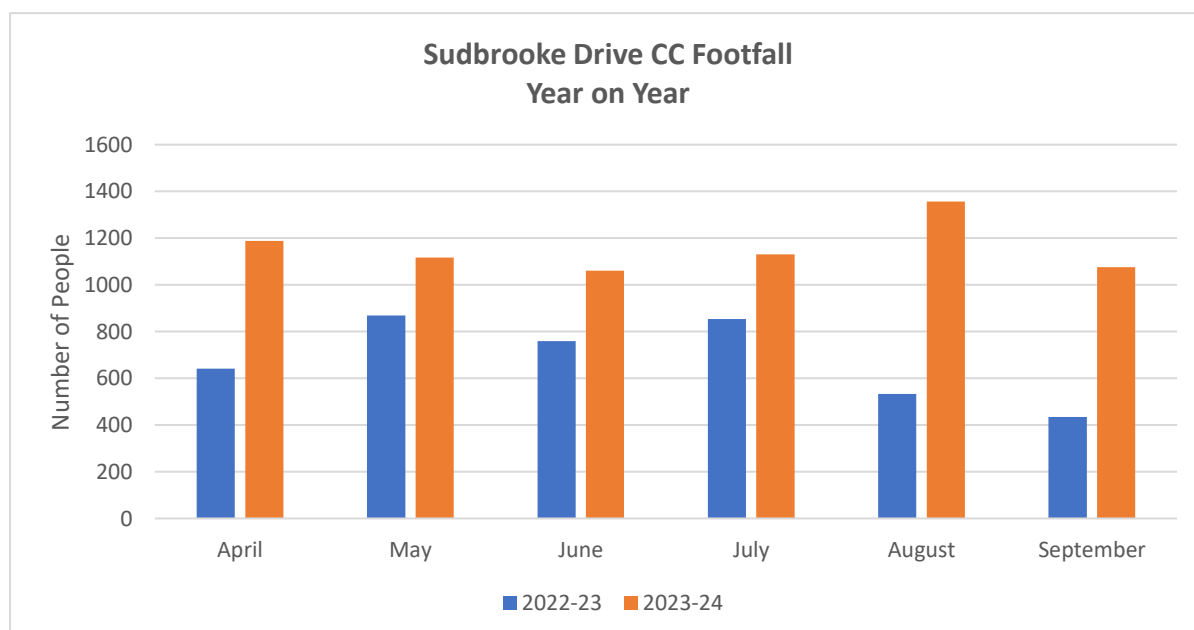
Growth (new bookings)

Moksha Yoga – Promoting healthy lifestyle with Hatha and Vinyasa yoga designed to align, cleanse and calm body, mind and spirit. As they are currently offering classes on a 'pay as you can afford' basis, City of Lincoln Council are supporting their booking with a 3-month standard rate charge, dependant on pricing remaining the same, to aid establishment of group.

Lincoln Concert Orchestra – music rehearsals

Badminton – Increased usage by City of Lincoln Council staff who are offered historically a discounted a rate of 50% to promote both physical and mental, health and wellbeing within the workforce.

*(other booking categories are shown in the overview of all centres later in the report).



Recreation Grounds

West Common Cricket Pitch and Pavilion

Successful season with 4 teams scheduling games, this is a slight decrease in income (-5%)

Football Pitches – King George, Sudbrooke Drive, Skellingthorpe Road and Moorland

Currently mid-season with provision at all venues in use by 13 Adult and 13 Junior teams.

Lincoln Sunday League have 9 teams allocated to King George, Sudbrooke Drive and Skellingthorpe Road as their home venues.

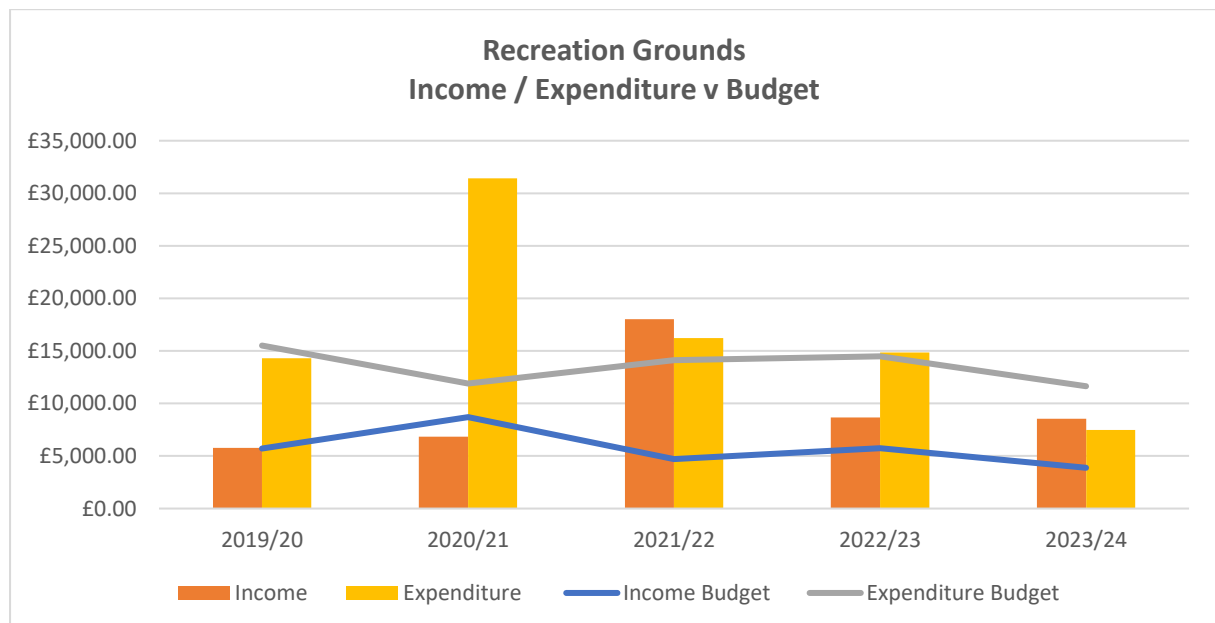
Lincoln Griffins Ladies have an adult team and 3 junior girls teams allocated to Moorland.

St Helens FC's ten junior teams regularly use Skellingthorpe Road pitches as their home venues.

University of Lincoln Men's Football have 3 teams using Skellingthorpe Road as their home venue.

Income currently a 17% increase on 2022-23 however this will increase as University of Lincoln book pitches on a game-by-game basis.

Financial Information



Physical Activity Strategy

'To deliver, support, facilitate and above all inspire Lincoln residents to be more active, more often and make physical activity part of everyday life.'

By providing a community space, facilitating the delivery of exercise classes and providing adequate space for health professionals and community groups to offer guidance and support for those living with health conditions, City of Lincoln Council Community Centres play an important role in the delivery of the Physical Activity Strategy.

The NHS Lincolnshire Integrated Care Board continue to deliver the vaccination hub at the Grandstand Community Centre, Weighing Rooms and are scheduled to attend until April 2024, providing a clinical environment, accessible, vital care to the local community.

Zumba, an exercise based, dance class has been a long running booking at the Grandstand Community Centre and the recent introduction of Yoga at Sudbrooke Drive Community Centre, offer an alternative to attending a gym facility for local communities looking at improving physical and mental wellbeing.

Badminton hire is available at both Moorland and Sudbrooke Drive Community Centres. Primarily used by Council employees, with a benefit of 50% discount, promoting physical wellbeing within the workplace. Regular weekly bookings are keyholder trained so a caretaker is not required, reducing barriers to the hirer.

The recent rise in popularity of Pickleball has resulted in enquiries for the hire of Badminton courts to facilitate games. The Recreation Officers have purchased Pickleball equipment to allow for newcomers to access the game within the centres. Pickleball is a sport that can be enjoyed by children and adults encouraging family activity.

Martial Arts groups continue to be regular hirers of the centres, offering weekly classes to both adults and children, promoting exercise, a healthy lifestyle and confidence building within a community setting. The number of groups has recently increased to four regular, weekly classes.

Lincoln City Foundation, a local charity dedicated to creating healthier, happier and inspired communities, offer Kurling and Carpet Bowls on a weekly basis at Moorland Community Centre. As a part of the EFL Trust, Extra Time initiative these activities are aimed at making a positive difference to the lives of retired and semi-retired people, providing them with the opportunity to meet like-minded people from the local area.

One You Lincolnshire currently provide a strength and balance programme, aimed at people over the age of 65 years, at Sudbrooke Drive Community Centre. By providing local, affordable rooms to facilitate these free services City of Lincoln Council aid people requiring support to make sustainable changes to improve their health and wellbeing and live a longer, happier life.

The Alzheimer's Society and Forget Me Not Café offer fortnightly sessions at Bud Robinson Community Centre to provide support and guidance for those people living with dementia and Alzheimer's, as well as their family and friends.

The Recreation Grounds are another area regularly used for seasonal, sporting activities. West Common Cricket Pitch continues to be used by the two main Cricket Clubs in Lincoln, Rustons and Carholme Cricket Clubs, as well as standalone clubs,

such as Monks Cricket Club. Skellingthorpe Road Playing Field, Sudbrooke Drive Playing Field, King George Playing Field and Moorland Backies are currently home grounds to 13 Adult and 13 Junior teams, including Lincoln Griffins, an all-girls team and the University of Lincoln Men's football. Working in partnership with the Lincoln Sunday League and University of Lincoln to offer regular football provision.

As detailed earlier in this report, statistics are being gathered monthly to establish the current offering of community provision, both in hourly usage and footfall, at the Community Centres. The data has been broken down into nine key areas, community, health, sport, education, training, religion, environment, music and party, to monitor usage and highlight areas requiring improvement, as well as those areas excelling.

Sport and Leisure

1. This past year has been a challenging year for Sport and Leisure both locally and nationally. There has been a continuing slow recovery from the coronavirus pandemic which saw the sector significantly impacted as shown in the usage statistics. In addition to the slow return of customers exercising and working from home, the economic difficulties meant that some families were having to make hard choices for their household budgets which meant health and exercise costs were hard to justify. Part of the economic issue was caused by world events and has resulted in a huge exponential increase in utility costs (three to four times the cost of pre pandemic levels) which for leisure facilities with swimming pools has been very challenging.
2. Active Nation, our Leisure providers managing the Birchwood and Yarborough Leisure Centres have worked hard to manage this reduction in usage numbers and increase in utility costs. In partnership with the City Council, we have applied for over £1.5 million of swimming pool support funding from Sport England.
3. Locally the main swimming pool at Yarborough Leisure Centre was shut in January 2022 due to emergency repairs following a routine inspection of the ceiling and re-opened on January 3rd, 2023.
4. The City Council have met and continue to meet with senior members of the Active Nation management team to explore the many and various ways we can support them through these difficult times.

Leisure Centre Stats

Quarterly usage Yarborough	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Pre pandemic	188,529	190,051	174,255	169,64
2021/22	39,879	87,485	76,946	*66,896
2022/23	*51,958	*60,934	*57,864	73,612
2023/24	99,520	103,392		
*Main pool closed for ceiling works				
Quarterly usage Birchwood				
Pre pandemic	57,774	57,138	57,321	57,144
2021/22	20,230	34,549	33,393	39,613
2022/23	33,468	37,616	31,185	35,483
2023/24	38,209	42,118		
AGP hours usage both sites				
Pre pandemic	520	555	612	630
2021/22	895	790	806	775
2022/23	689	635	806	728
2023/24	761	663		

Lincoln 10k

The Lincoln 10k Road Race took place on the 16th April 2023, with 3500 entries for the main race and 74 entries for the Junior Race.

The Team Challenge attracted 245 participants organisations, athletics clubs and the university.

Numbers dropped during the pandemic, however, are slowly rising and it is hoped a return to current levels will be achieved in coming years.

Participants were offered to opt for whether they wanted T-shirts and or Medals, as well as sugar cane goodie bags with cartons of water. Run For All has implemented these changes to help meet the Councils sustainability targets.

Next year's race is set for the 14th of April.

Crematorium

1. The Crematorium experienced another busy year with over 1800 cremations taking place throughout the year. The Bereavement Service team also undertook 130 full body and 170 cremated remains burials, these being carried out throughout our various Lincoln cemeteries.
2. Most of our cemeteries are now full for new full burial graves apart from Long Leys Road, but we continue to carry out reopen burials and burials in pre-purchased graves in all our cemeteries.
3. Officers have been busy since the installation of the new cremators last year, there has been a number of staffing changes in the year. These new staff have

been brought in from outside the service area and have now been fully trained, all achieving their Cremator Technician Qualifications.

4. The installation of the new cremators last year replaced the old cremators that had been in place for almost 25 years. These new cremators are more efficient machines that also allow for larger coffins to be cremated. With the new cremators we have been looking at ways to use them in the most environmentally efficient way to reduce our carbon footprint, the staff are able to monitor the gas usage on each cremation and plan each day to reduce as much standing time between cremations.
5. In an attempt to improve the Crematoriums service to the public, the crematorium management team have been further analysing the service offered and as a direct consequence have made a number of improvements. New promotional and informational leaflets have been produced to ensure the public know about the services offered.
6. The team have also improved the signage around the grounds and buildings to make it easier for visitors to navigate the site and to ensure that they attend the correct service in the correct chapel. .
7. In addition, a new software system has been introduced to improve the booking procedures for funeral directors. This new system will in time also enable the public to view and search for the services they want without the need to call the office.

Licensing

During the financial year 2022-2023, the licensing team have:

- Issued 409 Vehicle Licences
- Issued 688 Test Certificates
- Issued 3 Private Hire Operator Licences
- Issued 234 Private Hire (PH) Driver Licences
- Issued 21 Hackney Carriage (HC) Driver Licences
- Processed 183 Premises Licence Applications
- Processed 99 Personal Licence Applications

The above data shows the output of the Licensing team in relation to new applications received over the past year. It doesn't consider the management of the various categories of licences which are already in effect during the same period.

During the last year 13 drivers were referred through to the private hire and/or hackney carriage subcommittee. The breakdown of the outcomes of the 13 subcommittees is as followed:

- 9 Licences granted
- 2 Licences revoked
- 2 Licences Refused

The below table shows the number of licences that were active at the end of quarter 4 of the financial year 2022-2023:

Licence Type	Number of Licences
Premises	405
PH Drivers	409
PH Vehicles	290
PH Operator	22
HC Driver	33
HC Vehicles	31

The performance indicators for Licensing were refreshed at the end of 22/23. The comparison data for previous financial years is not available but will be included in future reports.

The financial year 22/23 saw Private Hire Vehicles and Drivers, that were registered in other areas, appearing in the City. This is currently being discussed at a national level due to the inability to effectively monitor the drivers when they are operating outside of their registered area. Private Hire Drivers that are registered with Lincoln and operate within the Lincoln are put at a disadvantage as they are subject to higher fees than those drivers that have registered at an authority such as Wolverhampton, which can offer considerably lower fees due to the significantly higher demand.

Food, Health and Safety Team Report 2023

The Food, Health and Safety Team continue to prioritise protecting public health, taking a risk-based approach, in line with the Food Law Code of Practice. This allows the service to focus on those businesses that present the greatest risk to public health.

Food, Health & Safety Team Resources

In terms of staff resources, the team currently consists of the Food, Health & Safety Team Leader, 2 Environmental Health Officers and 1 Food Safety Officer. There is currently a Food Safety Officer vacancy, however we have we are using a contractor to help fill this gap.

FSA Recovery Plan

For the first 3 months of this year the team were operating in accordance with directions outlined in the Food Standards Agency's (FSA), Local Authority Recovery Plan, which was brought in during the Covid 19 pandemic. This required us to concentrate on the most non-compliant

business (FHRS 0, 1 or 2) and although this is how we were already working already, it did have an effect on the service and the delivery of official controls in lower risk businesses.

Post Pandemic

Since 01 April 2023, we have reverted to operating in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice, which has brought back into the inspection programme those low-risk businesses that were given a low priority during the pandemic.

At the end of March 2023, there were 200 overdue low risk businesses, most of which had been due to be inspected during the pandemic. These businesses are currently being contacted using an Alternative Enforcement Strategy (AES), which provides flexibility for dealing with lower risk establishments. This is helping to bring down the number of outstanding inspections.

The AES is detailed in the Food Law Code of Practice and permits us to alternate between physical inspections and remote assessments of low-risk businesses. Remote assessments are being carried out of these businesses but if they fail to complete the questionnaire that we send them or we are concerned about the answers given, then physical inspections will be carried out to ensure compliance.

Volume of Work – Food Safety and Public Health (01/11/22 – 31/10/23)

Service Requests (e.g. Food and health & safety complaints, food hazard warnings and requests for advice on food safety , health & safety and public health related matters)	1337
Food Hygiene Inspections (Official Controls)	568 of which 49 were remote assessments as per the AES
New food business registered	222
Food and Environmental Samples Taken	125
Infectious Disease Notifications	15
Health & Safety Inspections where matters of evident concern found	2
Accident Notifications	44 of which 1 required investigation.

Official Food Controls Delivered

Between 01 November 2022 and 31 October 2023, 519 physical inspections were carried out and 259 written warnings were issued.

Examples of Food Safety & Public Health Complex Cases

During this period, the team have dealt with a number of complex cases with between 12-15 non-compliant businesses at any one time. Other complex cases include the following:

- A 5 rated food business allegedly sending food to online customers from a 0 rated food business. This was a joint investigation with Trading Standards.
- A recurring problem with flies in a national chain coffee shop that required working with their head office to find the source of the problem and rectify it
- Several complaints about rats and pigeons being in and around food businesses in the city centre
- Complex food complaints, for example a bolt in a quiche that has resulted in changes to the producer's food safety management system to prevent a reoccurrence from happening.
- Pest control issues regarding rats and cockroaches at a residential unit within Lincoln
- Working with other agencies i.e. Trading Standards, Police, NCA, Gangmaster etc. regarding illegal workers, modern day slavery, counterfeit alcohol and illegal tobacco etc.
- Investigation of a case of Ecoli in a 8 month old baby to establish how it was acquired and issues around getting suitable clearance for the baby to return to nursery setting
- There has been an increase nationally in Cryptosporidium cases and cases that we have had required enhanced surveillance

Examples of Health & Safety Complex Cases

- A business was served with a Health & Safety Prohibition Notice due to employees and members of the public being exposed to Carbon Monoxide, a major investigation is ongoing.
- University of Lincoln Student's Unions hosted the first Tattoo Convention in the City over the weekend Saturday 21st and 22nd October, 45 tattoo artists from across the Country attended the event. A health and safety inspection was completed during the event but there no issues, the officer worked closely with the organisers to make sure that it was run safely. It is anticipated that this will become an annual event for the City.
- Cases of flooding and water ingress into businesses, causing health and safety concerns
- Complaints about invasive beauty treatments that had allegedly gone wrong, we are currently restricted on what we can do in terms of enforcement, but we are awaiting new powers so that we can require licensing of practitioners.

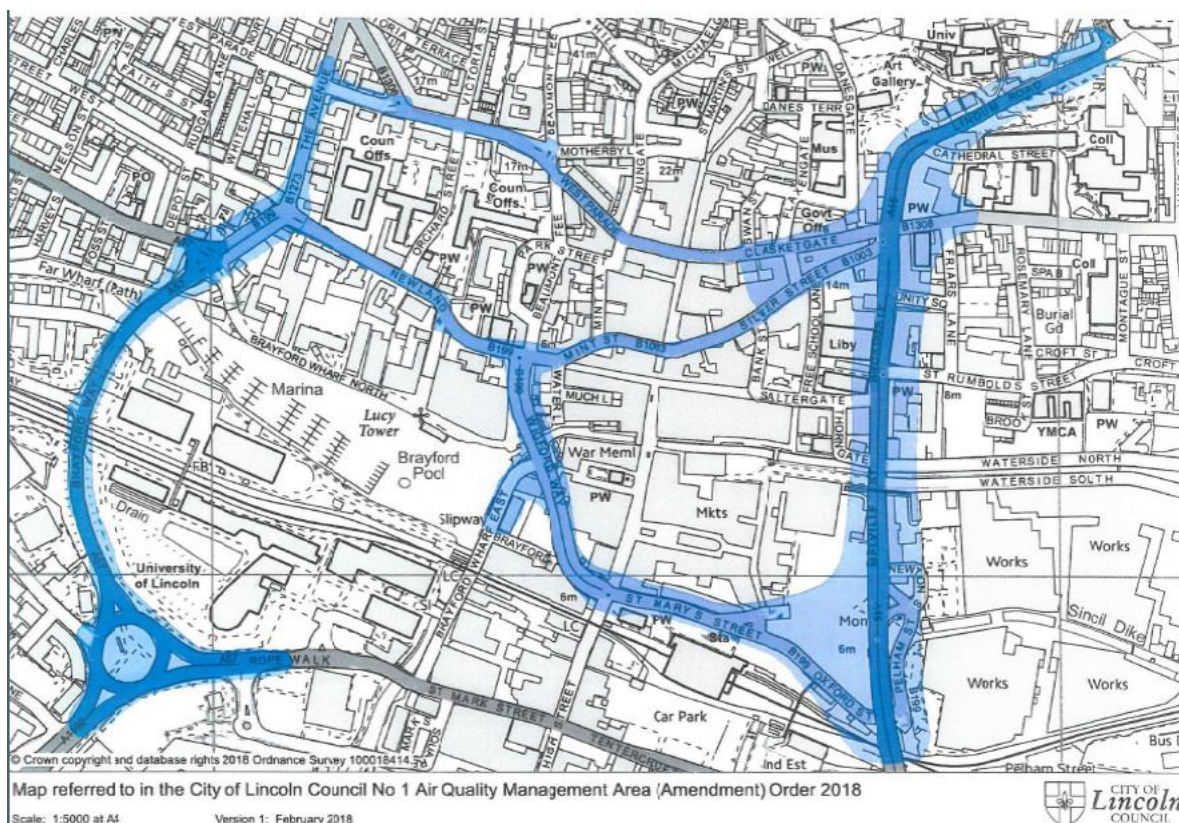
- We sought and were granted permission from the Secretary of State for Health to extend the skin piercing byelaws to include cosmetic piercing and semi-permanent skin colouring treatments
- Two Informal Notices were issued for matters of evident concern.

Local Air Quality Management

The Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) process set out in Part IV of the Environment Act (1995) places an obligation on all local authorities to regularly review and assess air quality in their areas, and to determine whether or not the national air quality objectives are likely to be achieved. Local authorities are required to produce an Annual Status Report (ASR), which details the current air pollution levels and provide updates on measures to improve air quality and any progress that has been made.

Where an exceedance is considered likely the local authority must declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and prepare an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) setting out the measures it intends to put in place in pursuit of the objectives.

The Council currently has one AQMA in place due to historic exceedances of the annual mean objective for nitrogen dioxide, a pollutant closely associated with road traffic (as well as other combustion sources). The AQMA closely follows the main road traffic routes through the centre of the city as can be seen on figure below.



Our monitoring network has not identified any likely exceedances of the national air quality objectives since 2018. No other monitoring location within the city has seen an exceedance of the air quality objectives since 2013. The most recent verified data (Annual Status Report 2023) was submitted to, and accepted by, Defra during the summer. I now propose to review and revoke Air Quality Management Area 1 and the

associated Air Quality Action Plan and have asked officers to consult with relevant agencies with a view to bringing a report back into the committee process.